

**LETTER-, WORD-
AND
MIND-BLINDNESS**

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Letter-, Word- and Mind-Blindness by James Hinshelwood

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JAMES HINSHELWOOD

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AND
MIND-BLINDNESS**

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BLINDNESS

BY

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SURGEON TO THE GLASGOW EYE INFIRMARY.

LONDON

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1900

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PREFACE.

OF the five chapters composing this little book, the last four were papers read before the Glasgow Medico-Chirurgical Society, and have been already published in the columns of the *Lancet*. These articles, embracing the results of extensive reading, as well as my own studies and observations, give a fairly comprehensive view of a subject, which has not received much attention in English medical literature. I have thought that the publication of these papers in book form would make them more accessible to those interested in the subject. For several reasons, it has been thought advisable to publish the papers in much the same form as they originally appeared in the columns of the *Lancet*, and therefore a certain amount of repetition, unavoidable in the circumstances, will be found in each of the chapters.

9 ELMBANK STREET, GLASGOW.

December, 1899.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
THE VISUAL MEMORY	1

CHAPTER II.

LETTER-, WORD- AND MIND-BLINDNESS	11
---	----

CHAPTER III.

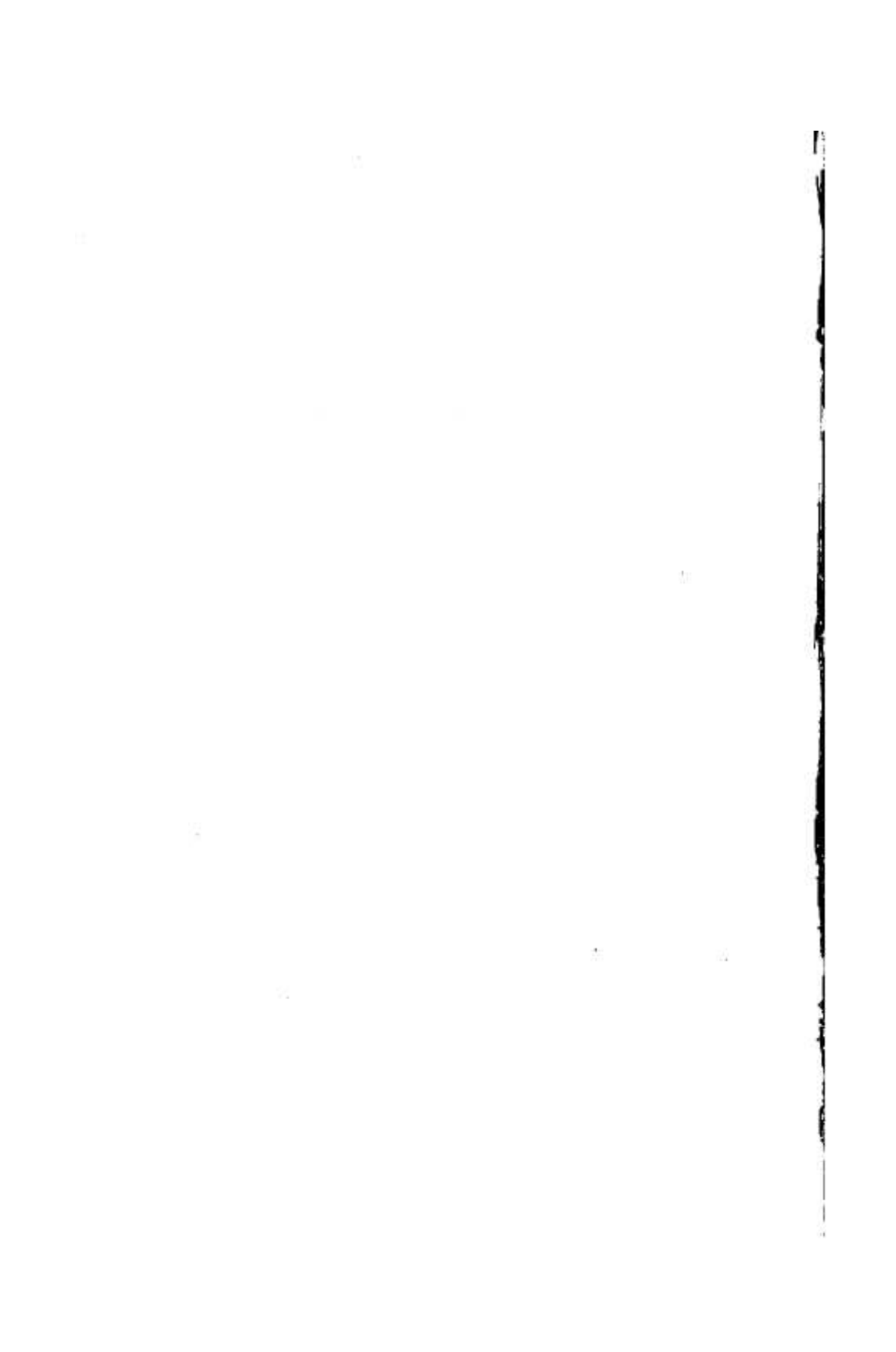
A CASE OF PARTIAL MIND-BLINDNESS WITH DYSLEXIA, A PECULIAR FORM OF WORD-BLINDNESS	37
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

WORD-, WITHOUT LETTER-BLINDNESS	52
---	----

CHAPTER V.

LETTER-, WITHOUT WORD-BLINDNESS	68
---	----



LETTER- WORD- AND MIND- BLINDNESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE VISUAL MEMORY.

For the successful performance of the function of vision, it is essential not only that the eyes should be healthy in structure and function, but also that the brain should co-operate harmoniously in interpreting the impressions made upon the sensory organ. The perfect performance of the visual act may therefore be regarded as the result of the combined and harmonious activity of eye and brain.

The eye is an optical instrument, so constructed that a picture of that part of the external world to which it is directed is thrown upon the retina or delicate nerve screen at the back of the eye. The rays of light striking upon the nerve tissue of the retina, set up chemical changes there, which are translated into nerve force through the medium of the special nerve terminals, the rods and cones. This nerve force is transmitted thence by the optic nerve to special regions of the brain, where these nerve changes are brought into the sphere of consciousness and appear as varieties of light form and colour. The optical aspect of vision has long been studied with great attention. The anatomy, physiology, pathology, and physics of the eye have been investigated with the greatest care. The cere-